



News Release

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Media Contact:
Jana Kettering
Public Information Officer
801-538-6339

Smallpox Vaccine Arrives in Utah

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) today received its first supply of the smallpox vaccine from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The 1,500 doses will be used to begin vaccinating those who will vaccinate others. Later this month, medical care and public health response teams, all volunteers, will receive the vaccine.

The smallpox vaccine is shipped in special insulated containers with a controlled temperature range of 36 to 46 degrees Fahrenheit or 2 to 8 degrees Celsius. The temperature or “cold chain” must be maintained as the vaccine is transported from CDC’s National Pharmaceutical Stockpile to States and then to local health departments. The vaccine is shipped in a kit containing the necessary items to administer the vaccine, including the unique two-pronged needles.

As part of Utah’s Bioterrorism preparedness plan, the Pre-event Smallpox Vaccination Plan was created. The plan outlines vaccination procedures to be used throughout Utah for public health teams and participating hospital smallpox medical care response teams. These teams will vary in size by hospital and public health department and are the first phase of the plan. Personnel will be vaccinated on a voluntary basis and be carefully screened through an in-depth health history to assure that each volunteer is an appropriate candidate for the vaccine. Teams will consist of doctors, nurses, and other essential medical care, hospital and public health personnel needed to provide medical care, vaccinations, case investigation and prevention.

Providing smallpox vaccination to team members before a confirmed smallpox case or outbreak provides them with protection against the smallpox disease. It thus enables them to rapidly take the actions needed to protect the public, which includes caring for patients with smallpox, and controlling spread of the outbreak, including establishing public vaccination clinics if needed.

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We anticipate that vaccinations in Utah will be delivered in three phases. At this time, only Phase one has been planned and approved by CDC. Each phase can only begin upon declaration by the Secretary of Health and Human Services:

- **Phase one** will include vaccination for hospital teams vital to providing care to possibly infected persons with smallpox virus (team members will be determined by the participating hospital), and public health response teams that will act to interrupt spread of the disease. Delivery may begin in mid-February where vaccinators will be vaccinated. Delivery of vaccine to health care providers may begin in March.
- **Phase two** will include the vaccination of identified first responder teams (i.e., emergency medical technicians, firefighters, law enforcement, additional administrative assistants, additional healthcare providers, etc.). Delivery may begin in late 2003.
- **Phase three** will make available vaccinations for the general public in the event they are needed. UDOH is not advising the general public to receive smallpox vaccinations at this time. Timing of delivery will be based upon a national recommendation or a credible case of smallpox identified in the United States.

Some volunteers may not be able to receive the vaccine. Those that cannot receive the vaccine include people with any of the following conditions:

- Immune suppression (in the person to be vaccinated or a close contact)
- Pregnancy (in the person to be vaccinated or a close contact)
- Eczema or atopic dermatitis (current or past) (in the person to be vaccinated or a close contact)
- Acute, chronic or exfoliative skin conditions (until improved or resolved).
- Serious allergic reaction to a prior dose of vaccine or vaccine component
- Darier disease (a rare inherited skin disease)
- Breastfeeding
- Infants or children (under 18 years of age)
- Treatment with steroid eye drops (until the treatment course is completed)
- Moderate or severe acute illness (until resolved).

No naturally occurring cases of smallpox have been diagnosed in the world since 1977 in Somalia. An intentional release of the smallpox virus is not thought to be likely, but since the consequences of an outbreak would be great, we must be prepared. For more information, visit: www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/index.asp, www.hhs.gov/smallpox/index.html or www.health.utah.gov or contact your state or local health department.

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